

#163 Reflecting on the DMZ: Emotional Stories and Symbolic Sites Between South and North Korea.

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Today, I watched a video about the DMZ, the border between South Korea and North Korea. Although I haven't had the chance to visit these places, I felt very emotional about them and the stories behind them. Let me share my thoughts.



1. **The Third Tunnel:** where a broken globe, supported by children and men, symbolizes the desire for peace between North and South Korea and for world peace.



2. **Mangbaedan Altar:** This memorial commemorates the separation of Korean families from their loved ones in the North. On special occasions such as New Year's Day and Chuseok (Korean Thanksgiving), families gather here to perform ancestral rites as a

gesture of respect.



3. **Freedom Bridge:** After the war, many South Koreans originally from North Korea were eager to come to South Korea, and most North Koreans who made it across did not want to leave. When one man crossed the bridge, he jumped with joy upon reaching South Korea, celebrating his freedom from North Korea. Hence, the bridge was named Freedom Bridge.



4. **Peace Bell:** The Peace Bell was created to symbolize the hope for peace and reunification between the two Koreas. The bell is often rung during ceremonies and events to promote peace and reflect on the desire for harmony on the Korean Peninsula.



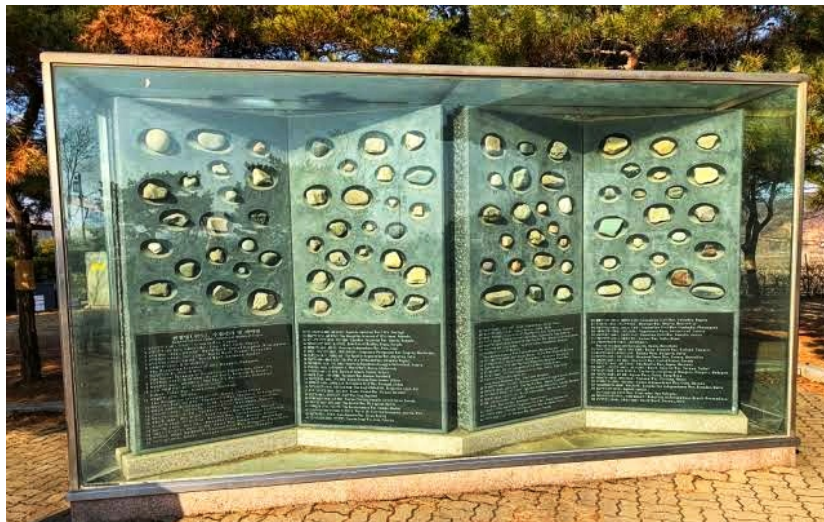
5. **Old stream locomotive:** The old steam locomotive's history is intertwined with the Korean War, serving as a vital transport during the conflict. Abandoned and damaged by around 1,020 bullets, it symbolizes the division between North and South Korea. Survivors from those bullets and was alive who rode this train embody resilience amidst devastation. Their stories reflect the human spirit's strength. Today, the locomotive stands as a historical artifact, preserving the memory of the war and the desire for peace and reunification on the Korean Peninsula.



6. **Gyeongui Line:** Ravaged by the war, the Gyeongui Line once served as a vital connection between North and South Korea. Despite its destruction, locals maintain hope for reunification, envisioning a future where trains once again traverse from South to North Korea. This belief in eventual unity symbolizes the enduring desire for reconciliation and the restoration of connections severed by conflict.



7. **Color Ribbon:** At various points along the DMZ, especially near barbed wire fences, will find color ribbons tied by visitors. These ribbons are often inscribed with messages of hope, peace, lost family and reunification. They symbolize the collective yearning for harmony and a united Korea, serving as a poignant contrast to the stark and divisive nature of the barbed wire.



8. **War Stone Collection:** Stones collected from the DMZ and other war-torn areas symbolize the enduring impact of the Korean War. These stones from different wars happened all over the world serve as tangible reminders of the conflict and its scars on the land and people. They represent both the history of division and the hope for healing and reunification, embodying the resilience and spirit of those affected by the war.

Unlike other tourist spots, the places I mentioned carry deep emotional significance and symbolize the desire for unity between South Korea and North Korea. Families on both sides have been torn apart, and people still long to return to their homes, not as divided nations but as one Korean people. They hold onto the hope that one day their nation will be united, and they can refer to themselves simply as Koreans, not North or South Koreans. Their culture, language, and traditions are very similar. As an Indian, I see a parallel; despite our diverse regions, we ultimately identify as Indians. Similarly, Koreans yearn for peace and unity between the South and the North.

“One Korea, United in Peace and Hope”